



One Minute Guide

Healthy Start

What is the Healthy Start Scheme?

The Healthy Start Scheme is a government funded, means tested scheme that aims to improve diets and provide a nutritional safety net for low-income families in the UK. The scheme is available to pregnant women, who are more than 10 weeks pregnant or parent/carers who have a child under the age of 4 who receive state benefits.

What do families on the Healthy Start Scheme get?

If eligible you get:

- £4.25 each week of your pregnancy from the 10th week
- £8.50 each week for children from birth to 1 year old
- £4.25 each week for children between 1 and 4 years old

If eligible, you'll be sent a Healthy Start card with money on it that you can use in most UK shops - they just have to accept MasterCard.

You can use your card to buy:

- plain liquid cow's milk
- fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables
- fresh, dried, and tinned pulses
- infant formula milk based on cow's milk

You can also use your card to collect:

- Healthy Start vitamins – these support you during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- vitamin drops for babies and young children – these are suitable from birth to 4 years old

Who is eligible for the Healthy Start Scheme?

- Pregnant and/or have at least one child under 4 - remember you're claiming per child. Either parent or carer can apply.
- Young parents - aged under 18
- Some families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)

At least 10 weeks pregnant / at least one child under 4

You must also receive any one of the following:

- Universal Credit (only if your family's take-home pay is £408 or less per month from employment)
- Child Tax Credit (only if your family's annual income is £16,190 or less)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Pension Credit (which includes the child addition)
- You, your partner, or your carer get Working Tax Credit run-on only

Non-British Citizens who have a British Citizen child may get Healthy Start if all the following apply:

- They have at least 1 British Child under 4 years old
- The family earns £408 or less a month after tax
- They cannot claim public funds either because of their immigration status or they do not have an immigration status

How can families access the Scheme?

- Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit - <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/>
- Legacy Benefit Under 18 - Email healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk or call 0300 330 7010
- NRPF - Email healthystartclaim@dhsc.gov.uk

Be a Healthy Start Champion

If you work with families, particularly those with a low-income, you play a **key role** in signposting to the Healthy Start scheme online application and promoting the free Healthy Start vitamins. Research shows that when people are introduced to the scheme by a professional (who takes the time to explain the health benefits and frames it in the context of a 'child right') they are more likely to make better use of the scheme. We also know that many families struggle to access the scheme and so practical support to complete the online application is invaluable.

Being a **Healthy Start Champion** could look different for everyone - it might be putting the Healthy Start banner on your email signature; putting up some posters in your setting; learning more about the scheme and having more conversations with families; helping families sign up using an iPad in their home or hosting an event in your local community where you promote the scheme.

Resources to promote the scheme can be found here - [NHS Healthy Start communications toolkit](#) | [NHS Business Services News \(nhsbsa.nhs.uk\)](#)

Resources in different languages are available here – [Healthy-Start-leaflet-translations.pdf \(sustainweb.org\)](#)

Healthy Start Banners are also available to hire at the **Public Health Resource Centre**, as well as Eatwell Guides, toy foods and cookbooks - [Public Health Resource Centre \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#)

For more information on **Digital Inclusion** and the ability to hire digital resources - [100% Digital Leeds \(digitalinclusionleeds.com\)](#)

If you would like more information on the scheme and how to be a Healthy Start Champion a **Want to Know More** recording is available here: <https://youtu.be/OC7DbYSyBkw>

More information can also be found here - [Get help to buy food and milk \(Healthy Start\)](#)